

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 AMMAN 002826

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/05/2010

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [JO](#)

SUBJECT: DETAILS ON JORDAN'S NEW REFORMIST GOVERNMENT

REF: A. AMMAN 2819

[B](#). AMMAN 2694

[C](#). AMMAN 2557 (NODIS/NOTAL)

Classified By: Charge David Hale, Reasons 1.4 (B) & (D)

[1](#). (C) Summary. Jordan's King has selected a committed reformist and respected figure, but a bit of a dark horse, as the next prime minister. Marwan al-Muasher gave the cabinet details to Charge. These include his taking the highly influential post of Royal Court Minister, the removal of the Foreign Minister (road kill since the Algiers summit), and selection of a dynamic, private sector oriented economic team led by Bassam Awadallah as Finance Minister. Reformists will be encouraged; traditional East Bankers will view a Palestinian-flavored cabinet and a Christian in the royal court with considerable dismay. While we should suspend judgment until all the details are made public, the King's choices appear to be consistent with U.S. reform goals and should deserve our support. End summary.

[2](#). (C) At the King's request, Marwan al-Muasher ) outgoing Deputy PM and incoming Royal Court Minister ) briefed Charge on April 5 on the new government, which would be sworn in April 7 or 12. The King wanted sweeping portfolio changes, Muasher said, to strengthen the government's capacity to pursue the full range of his reform agenda ) political, economic and social. Prime Minister-designate Adnan Badran was not personally known well by the King, but Badran fit his criteria: he was a strong, committed reformist, open minded, carried political weight, and had a wealth of experience. He was also an excellent executive, as his management of Jordan's premier university, Philadelphia University, demonstrated. As for the other cabinet picks, the emphasis would be heavily on reform. Three or four ministers would be chosen to provide "experience and wisdom." Those current ministers with a demonstrated commitment to reform would remain; those without, would go. The economic team would be lead by Bassam Awadallah, as the new Finance Minister. He would be joined by dynamic figures from the private sector. The uninspiring Trade and Industry Minister Hindawi would leave. The new Foreign Minister will be Farrouk Kasrawy, now head of Jordan's Diplomatic Institute. Muasher described Kasrawy as Jordan's best professional diplomat ) seasoned, experienced, but not pro-active, and hence a welcome change from the overly creative, even manic Hani al-Mulki. The King would provide the policy initiative; Kasrawy would handle implementation. Marwan Dudin, a well-known Palestinian figure here, would be made Deputy Prime Minister, and Palestinians would comprise half the cabinet. The King's letter of designation would make clear his desire to see an accelerated pace of reform, including political reform, advancement of the national agenda, and improved handling of Arab relations so bruised by Mulki's five month tenure.

[3](#). (C) At the palace, apart from Masher's selection, Rania Attallah would be the new communications director. Currently the Queen's Chief of Staff, Attallah will bring the spirit of reform to the palace's relations with the press. Outgoing PM Faysal al-Fayez will be named chief of the royal court, with responsibility for protocol, tribal affairs, Hashemite family matters, and palace outreach. As minister of royal court, Muasher will handle all policy matters and governmental liaison. He is the first Christian in one of Jordan's four most critical jobs. He said he will remain a member of the national agenda committee, an important forum for advancing the nation's reform effort. The Royal Court will be reorganized on a model provided by Booz Allen.

[4](#). (C) Comment: The King, unhappy that the cabinet was split between reformists and traditionalists and lacking leadership from the amiable but often obtuse PM, has been considering changes for sometime. His decision to proceed with a clean sweep (ref C) came amidst a series of missteps made by the government in Amman which undercut the King while in Washington . Challenged by U.S. media about his commitment to reform, the King returned determined to shake complacency and remove those figures whose corruption or anti-reform impulses tarnished him by association. The King has handpicked the entire new cabinet, although a decent delay in announcing the rest of the team will lend the appearance that Badran chose them. The King took advice from the Queen, Muasher, Awadallah, and Royal Protocol Chief Muhammad al-Haymaq (who has long experience in international advertising and business management). GID Chief Saad Khayr was conspicuously absent from the process, and the power

pendulum has shifted sharply in Jordan toward Muasher and Awadallah, for now. While we should suspend judgment until the entire cabinet is revealed, the King's direction is encouraging and designed to create a modern, energetic, and cohesive reform team. Badran will face two challenges. The first comes in his handling of a traditionalist parliament; Muasher said the King will call in bloc leaders next week and seek their support for the reforms and his reformist team, but in the end it will be left to Badran to move legislation.

The second challenge comes from Khayr, whose role is a diminishing one but who speaks for the many conservative East Bank constituents of the King. They, to a man, will view with alarm this reformist, heavily Palestinian cabinet, led by a university president, and an enhanced palace role for a Christian often described by his foes as "more Palestinian than the Palestinians."

HALE